

## Gate 207



The gate on plot 207 was discovered during a volunteer day on Saturday 2nd December 2023 when the area was designated for new hedgerow replanting. The gate had clearly not been used for a while, as the area was completely overgrown. Although the gate was in a very poor state, the original size could be established from the existing wood. It is most likely that it was made by a plot holder from salvaged wood from buildings. Image above restored gate with a hedge growing around it as is our intension for the future. Image below gate when discovered.





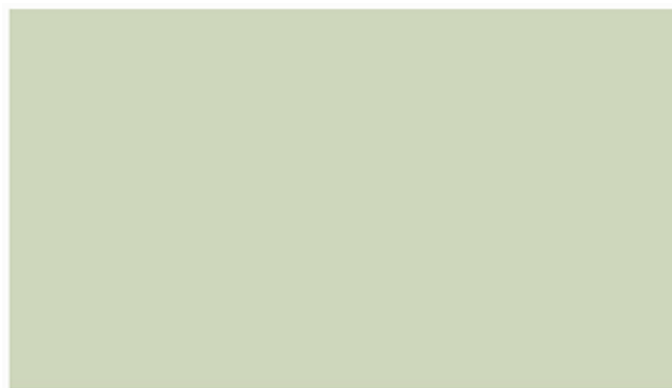


I estimate it was first installed around mid 1960s but could be as early as the mid 1950s or as late as the early 1970s. There were various pieces of metal dug into the ground in a line with the gate which is likely a makeshift fence, there were parts of old bedsteads found in the soil. All the metal “fence” and gate are 3ft inside the existing modern fence boundary. We know that plot holders used metal bedsteads in the 1930s to create fences, and this makeshift fence could predate the gate.

Repairs to the gate appear to have been carried out over time. The hinges, padlock and chain are newer, more likely 1990s. The gate post had holes where previous screws would have been, showing that the gate was fixed slightly differently in the past. Although the gate was probably not fully painted, as no flakes of paint were visible even in corners, some sections of wood had paint underneath.

The gates cross rails had a white paint with a light green paint underneath, showing that this section of wood was painted. This indicates that the gate was made from various pieces of salvaged wood which may have had paint on them rather than being bare wood as we see today and that the paint has worn off over time. I would expect that they came from a house.

Although paint colours degrade over time due to the materials used in the paint and UV light, the light green colour (below left) is similar to colours used in the 1920s and 1930s and earlier. An example SC928 from Patrick Baty’s Paper & Paints 1920s colour range (below right)



SC928 - ARTEMIS

#### Wood

The gate was made with two 8" boards and one 12" board. The plan was always to save as much of the old wood as possible. In most cases the existing wood only served to give the dimensions needed. The section of wood with the chain, lock and bolt were of most interest and were salvaged.

The very top of the gate had rotted down by at least 4 inches. So the top shape of the original gate was unknown, I added a curved top.

#### Metalwork



The metal hinges were reused, the 6 coach bolts that secured the hinges were replaced but the original washers and nuts were reused. The bolt was very degraded but was kept as well as the chain and padlock. The gate was made with 2 ¼" round nails bent over at the end to form a type of staple often referred to as "clinching nails". The nails were replaced with new round nails and clinched.

In the soil around the gate two pieces of gate hinge were found the shape was very similar to the current hinges. It is likely that they were older hinges that became damaged over time and were replaced. Below image of the newly built gate.



The location of the gate

When the location of the original gate was excavated, a concrete base was found on the inside. On the outside area was found numerous stones. I added a line of bricks to fill the gap directly under the door to stop plants like ivy from growing up. When I dug down about 6 inches, I found old carpet in line with the gate and concrete base, which meant that at some point carpet ran along the plot boundary between plot 207 and 209. You would have opened the gate stepped onto the concrete base then walked along the carpet.

There was a large amount of soil in the hedge area, mostly caused by overspill of an existing compost bin. Around 2 tonnes of soil was redistributed.

The gate was stained to give it an older appearance and oiled. The sections of useable wood were cut into the new gate. The Gate posts were both replaced.

Images below of the gate location and image right soil dug over ready for replanting.

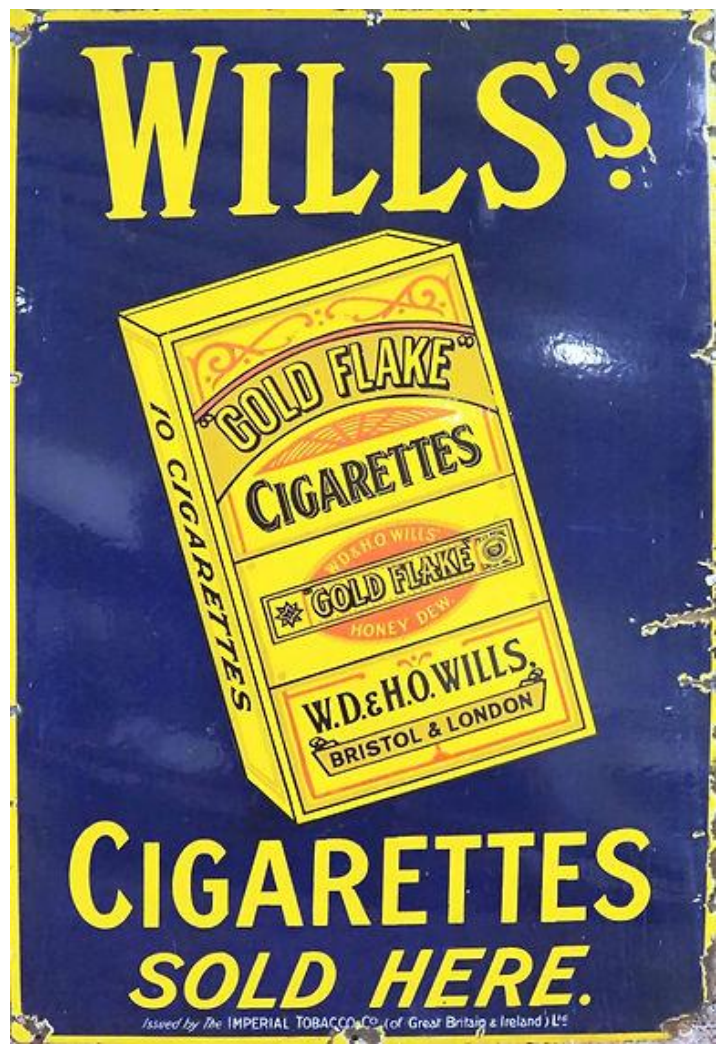




### Treasure found while digging

Whenever the hedgerow is designated for replanting it gives me an opportunity to look for historic finds or as I would say treasure. The largest item we found was a part of an enamel sign. The Wills gold flake sign would have been used in a local newsagent or general store as the sign says "Sold here". It may have been used in a shop on Northfield avenue or the Uxbridge road at some time from the 1920s-1950s. Other finds include a small green poison bottle c.1920 and a toothpaste pot lid c.1910. There were other fragments in the ground like a Codd bottle lid, stoneware bottle and medicine bottles but it looked like the area had been cleaned out at some time in the past, possibly in the 1990s as there were no crisp packets, bottles and coins which are very typical of undisturbed ground.







## Horseshoe added

A horseshoe found on the allotment has been added to the front of the gate to highlight the fact that in the early decades, many plot holders would have travelled to the allotments by horse, many coming from Brentford.

On 28th October 1858, over 150 years ago, an allotment committee meeting was held and discussed that “Many holders have horses, allowing them to feed about the Common (allotment), to injury of other holders & asks Committee to take some action”. It was agreed to caution the horse owners not to allow them to roam loose under pain of dispossession.

Images below of the completed gate.

